

SENATE BILL 2497  
By Ford J

AN ACT to enact the "Hepatitis A Protection and Control Act".

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE:

SECTION 1. This act shall be known as the "Hepatitis A Protection and Control Act".

SECTION 2. The purpose of this act is to control the Hepatitis A epidemic presently underway in Shelby and Knox Counties and to prevent further Hepatitis A outbreaks statewide. Hepatitis A is a viral infection that infected over two thousand (2,000) Tennesseans in 1995. Over one thousand five hundred (1,500) were infected in Shelby County and over two hundred (200) were infected in Knox County. Many thousands contracted the disease over the last forty (40) years. Hepatitis A is a liver disease that can debilitate its victims for months. Up to twenty percent (20%) of those infected require hospitalization. The financial cost of the disease averages up to five thousand dollars (\$5,000) per patient. In a few cases, the human cost of Hepatitis A is death; in nearly all cases, the human cost is misery.

SECTION 3.

(a) All children shall be fully immunized against Hepatitis A before entering kindergarten, nursery school daycare or Head Start in all counties deemed to be experiencing a Hepatitis A epidemic outbreak.

(b) A county shall be considered a Hepatitis A epidemic outbreak county when the annual reported community-wide incidence of Hepatitis A reaches fifty (50) cases per one hundred thousand (100,000) residents. This definition is consistent with the definition of a Hepatitis A outbreak adopted by the United States Centers for Disease Control (CDC). The secretary of the department of health shall determine when such an

outbreak has been controlled and may discontinue the immunization requirements when such a determination has been made.

SECTION 4. The secretary of the department of health shall promulgate rules and regulations to implement an effective and comprehensive immunization plan to vaccinate children before they enter kindergarten, nursery school, daycare or Head Start in Hepatitis A epidemic outbreak counties.

SECTION 5. This act shall take effect July 1, 1996, the public welfare requiring it.